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141 journalists killed in 2012: media watchdog

GENEVA (AFP) - Last year was one of the deadliest on record for journalists, with 141 killed in 29 different countries and Syria the most dangerous place on earth for reporters, a media watchdog said Thursday.

The Swiss-based Press Emblem Campaign (PEC), which fights for the protection of journalists, said the figure was up by 31 percent on 2011.

At least 37 journalists, among them 13 working for foreign media, were killed in Syria, it said in a statement.

Four journalists are reported missing or detained: Ukrainian Anhar Kochneva, Jordanian-Palestinian Bashar Fahmi, freelance US reporter Austin Tice and another American reporter James Foley, who has contributed video to Agence France-Presse.

The situation in Somalia

has deteriorated dramatically, where 19 were killed, said the PEC.

Three Latin American countries followed among the most dangerous places: Mexico with 11 journalists killed, Brazil also with 11 dead, and Honduras, where six journalists were killed.

The Philippines ranked number seven with six killed, followed by Bangladesh and India with four each, said the PEC.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists for its part said last month that 67 reporters were killed in 2012, up 42 percent from the previous year, due in large part to the Syria conflict, shootings in Somalia, violence in Pakistan and killings of reporters in Brazil.

The Paris-based press rights group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) meanwhile put the number of those killed at 88 last year.

Top Chavez officials gather in Havana



CARACAS, Venezuela (AFP) - Top Venezuelan officials gathered in Cuba day amid growing demands for news about cancer-stricken President Hugo Chavez' condition, days before he is to be sworn in for another term.

The latest senior official reported to have arrived in Havana was Disodado Cabello, who as head of the National Assembly would be a key player in any succession plan should Chavez be unable to take the oath on January 10.

Ultimas Noticias, a newspaper that has generally been well connected to the government, said Cabello flew to Cuba on Wednesday to join Chavez's handpicked successor Vice President Nicolas Maduro and other top officials.

Chavez, 58, is in Cuba, Venezuela's close ally among leftist-led Latin American nations, for medical treatment.

Among his visitors have been son-in-law Science and Culture Minister Jorge Arreaza; Attorney General Cilia Flores, who is Maduro's partner; and Chavez's brother Barinas governor Adan Chavez.

The Venezuelan president has not been seen since he underwent a long and complicated surgery for a recurrence of cancer 23 days ago,

and officials have acknowledged that his recovery has been difficult.

On Wednesday, Bolivia's President Evo Morales, a close Chavez friend and ally, said he had spoken to his family and that his condition was "very worrying."

"Let's hope our prayers will be effective in saving the life of brother President Chavez," Morales said of Chavez, the longtime leader of OPEC member Venezuela, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves.

Chavez, who was re-elected October 7 despite a long, debilitating battle with cancer and the strongest opposition challenge yet to his 14 year rule, is supposed to take office in a week for an-

other six year term.

But it was still unclear whether he would be fit to take office.

Venezuela's constitution calls for new elections to be held within 30 days if the president is unable to take the oath of office or dies during his first four years in office.

Former vice president Elias Jaua said in a tweet Wednesday that Chavez alone "will decide what to do January 10," suggesting he had no plans for now to give up the presidency.

Before leaving for Cuba for his fourth round of surgery, Chavez chose Maduro as his successor and left him in charge of the country without formally handing over the powers of the presidency.

Rumors meanwhile have proliferated in the absence of detailed information about Chavez's health, and the main opposition movement had demanded the government to "tell the truth" about his condition.

"It is essential that the government act in a manner that gives confidence. It is essential that it tell the truth," said Ramon Guillermo Aveledo, head of the opposition umbrella group MUD.

He called on the government to provide "a diagnosis and a medical prognosis" on the 58-year-old Chavez's condition.



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Randolph Paskel wins Coca Cola Green Dreams Toyota Prius C



Last Saturday evening, Randolph Paskel became the lucky winner of a brand new Toyota Prius C during the gran finale of the Coca Cola Green Dreams at the Renaissance Marketplace. Randolph's spouse found the Toyota logo under one of the green taps of the Coca Cola

drink. He then registered for the concourse and appeared for the final event for the opportunity to win the car.

Marketing Manager of Coca Cola, Vanessa Hollander and Marketing Manager of Garage Cordia, Luisa Montalvo congratulated Randolph with his mega prize. They congratulated all other par-



ticipants who participated in the great Coca Cola

Green Dreams campaign.

Hollander said that the

company was happy to say thanks to their customers through this major campaign.

Montalvo, on the other hand expressed that Toyota was pleased to present such a tremendous vehicle to the lucky winner on Wednesday January 2nd. Coca Cola Green Dreams organizers expressed their gratitude to all their clients who supported them throughout the entire year purchasing their Coca Cola and Sprite products. Their 12 sponsors: Garage Cordia, Toyota Prius C Hybrid, Setar N.V., The Cinemas, CMB Bank, Domino's Pizza, Subway, Starbucks, Indulgence by the Sea, Red Sail Sports, Aquarius Restaurant, Kooyman and Renaissance Market place were all lauded for their contributions.

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Clinton aims to return to work next week

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Only hours after being released from hospital after treatment for a blood clot, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was Thursday hoping to end a month-long absence and be back at work next week.

"She's resting at home," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters. "Some of the senior staff who spoke to her about half an hour ago say that she's sounding terrific, upbeat, raring to go."

The globe-trotting 65-year-old diplomat was admitted to New York Presbyterian Hospital on Sunday after a routine scan revealed the clot in a vein behind her right ear in the space between her skull and her brain.

It was just the latest in a series of health scares, which have grounded the normally tireless Clinton, who in four years in office has traveled almost a million miles and visited a record-breaking 112 countries.

Clinton left hospital late Wednesday after three days of treatment, including spending New Year's Eve in a hospital bed, and doctors who have prescribed her blood thinners say they expect her to make a full recovery.

"She's looking forward to getting back to the office," Nuland said. "She is very much planning to do so next week. And we'll have further, precise details about that as she continues to make progress."

Nuland said there had been an outpouring of support for Clinton from well-wishers from around the world. "I think you could call the number of goodwill messages a tsunami," she said.

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US fines Transocean \$1.4 bn over Gulf oil disaster

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States hit drilling rig operator Transocean with \$1.4 billion in criminal and civil fines Thursday for its role in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

Nearly two months after oil giant BP was fined \$4.5 billion for its leading role in the disaster, Transocean agreed to plead guilty to violating the Clean Water Act

and pay the fines, the Justice Department said.

The blowout on its drilling rig Deepwater Horizon on April 20, 2010, killed 11 and sent some 4.9 million barrels of oil into the Gulf, one of the country's most devastating environmental disasters.

The Transocean vessel was drilling the well for BP at the time, and both companies had pointed the finger at the other as responsible.

In pleading guilty, the department said, Transocean admitted its rig crew was "negligent in failing fully to investigate clear indications that the Macondo well was not secure and that oil and gas were flowing into the well."

The firm was ordered to pay \$400 million to resolve criminal charges and another \$1 billion in civil penalties, partly to fund spill prevention and environmental restoration in the five

states hit by the three-month-long spill.

"Transocean's rig crew accepted the direction of BP well site leaders to proceed in the face of clear danger signs -- at a tragic cost to many of them," said Assistant Attorney General Lanny Breuer.

"Transocean's agreement to plead guilty to a federal crime, and to pay a total of \$1.4 billion in criminal and civil penalties, appropriately reflects its role in the Deep-

water Horizon disaster."

Transocean said in a statement that the agreements to plead guilty and pay the fines had removed much of the uncertainty about its operations from the case.

"This is a positive step forward, but it is also a time to reflect on the 11 men who lost their lives aboard the Deepwater Horizon. Their families continue to be in the thoughts and prayers of all of us at Transocean."



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'Skyfall' joins Oscar runners in US producers' nods

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Bond blockbuster "Skyfall" joined already Oscar-tipped films like Steven Spielberg's "Lincoln" and Iran spy drama "Argo" on the Producers Guild of America best film shortlist, it was announced Wednesday.

Osama bin Laden man-hunt movie "Zero Dark Thirty" and Quentin Tarantino's brutal western "Django Unchained" were also among 10 films nominated by the PGA, whose choices have a history of pointing towards Oscar glory.

"Skyfall" by director Sam Mendes is the first 007 movie to make it onto the PGA shortlist, putting it alongside a bevy of films that have already gained Oscars buzz as Hollywood's annual awards season heats up.

Others nominated for the PGA's Darryl F. Zanuck Producer of the Year Award include musical adaptation "Les Misérables" by Tom Hooper and "Life of Pi" by Taiwanese-American Ang Lee, both also already Oscar tipped.

The PGA shortlist also includes Wes Anderson's "Moonrise Kingdom," "Happines Therapy" by David O. Russell and "Beasts of the Southern Wild," all less talked about so far in Tinseltown this season.

Marriott celebrate 2012 successes with a twelve million pagara



Marriott's exec team at the start of the 12 million pagara



On Monday December 31st, 2012 the Aruba Marriott lit the largest "pagara" firecracker in the history of Aruba.

The bright red firecrackers of 12 million shots were spread out through the Aruba

Marriott Resort, Marriott Aruba Ocean Club and the Marriott Aruba Surf Club parking lot.

To celebrate the 2012 successes of the three Marriott hotels, the new General Manager Tom Calame lit the 12



GM Tom Calame ready to lit the largest pagara in Aruba



million pagara, at its starting point at the entrance of the Marriott Aruba Surf Club ending the Big Bang at the Marriott Grand Ballroom.

Orchestrated by Morales Fireworks, associates and guests witnessed the spectacular pagara event, blessing

the Marriott hotels for a prosperous 2013. After the "Big Bang" the Dande group spread the good fortune for the associates and guests for the New Year "Ay Nobe."

The Aruba Marriott team wishes you all a beautiful 2013.

Evelyn Farrell says Thanks a Million!



Evelyn graduated at Level V, which is the highest level in

Athletics in Sprint & Hurdle of IAAF. Evelyn is actually

an International High Level Coach and can work anywhere around the world with her Level V distinction. She graduated from USATF Academy in San Diego, California. Part of her program required her to solve a real problem in an athletic group, whether one of an injured person or one who began performing well then began performing poorly. In Evelyn's class there were 43 coaches from different countries. The Caribbean region was represented by 6 coaches includ-

ing Aruba. The others came from Canada and the United States. Evelyn scored in the top 10 for her project with a score of 14. Evelyn's task now is to work with our coaches to create a sound structure for our athletes to achieve high scores among the best in the Caribbean and the world.

Evelyn wants to especially thank the former President of the AAB, Harry Janssen. Janssen believed in her abilities and as a result sent her to the Academy together with

the Board.

She also wants to thank Minister Visser, Nicole Hovertsz, Maximo Wernet, Sidney Regales, Dr. Sandy Rojas, Andy Gomes, Felix Pinja and Peter Simon. Also on her list for words of gratitude are all her sponsors, such as Setar NV, PWC PriceWaterhouseandcoopers, Aruba Bank, Aruwood Designers NV and all those others, too many to mention.

In her words..."Thanks a million ...also to the Board of AAC Aruba Athletic Club."

US auto sales roared in 2012 as Toyota leads pack

CHICAGO (AFP) - US auto sales roared ahead in 2012, with Toyota, Honda and Chrysler outpacing their rivals with double-digit gains as Ford and General Motors posted modest growth Thursday.

Ford estimated that total 2012 sales would come in at about 14.8 million vehicles when all automakers have reported, about a 14 percent gain from a year earlier.

It forecast that 2013 sales would rise to between 15 and 16 million vehicles in the United States, which will represent a near full recovery from the crash of 2008.

"Overall, we expect global sales to grow this year, supported by an ongoing recovery in the US as well as improving sales in China," Ford economist Ellen Hughes-Cromwick said in a conference call.

"Gains in these markets are offset somewhat by the weakness in the European markets."

GM estimated that US sales would come in at about 14.5 million units for 2012 and forecast somewhat more modest growth in the coming year.

"GM's strong finish in 2012, the industry's momentum and the overall health of the US economy make us optimistic about 2013," GM sales chief Kurt McNeil said.

"The budget compromise reached in Washington this week removes uncertainty and clears the way for full-year light vehicle sales to rise to the 15 million to 15.5 million unit range in 2013."

Toyota and Honda saw sales climb sharply as they recovered from the devastating Japanese tsunami, which smashed their supplies in 2011, and lured customers with popular new models.

Toyota reported a 27 percent gain in 2012 sales to

nearly 2.1 million vehicles as December sales rose nine percent to 194,143 vehicles.

"With sales nearly doubling the increase of a healthy industry, Toyota had a breakout year in 2012," said Jim Lentz, chief of Toyota Motor Sales USA.

"As we move into 2013 and the market sees continued growth, we expect to outperform the industry once again with another nine product launches on the horizon."

Honda sales jumped 24 percent to more than 1.4 million vehicles last year -- its fourth best year ever and the strongest performance since 2008 -- as December sales rose 26 percent to 132,774.

"Honda began the year intent on recovery," said John Mendel, head of sales at American Honda.

"We ended 2012 with multiple product awards, a host of sales records, Honda's second best December ever, and tremendous momentum as we head into 2013."

Ford reported its best December sales since 2006, though they grew just two percent from the same month a year earlier to 214,222 vehicles.

The number two US automaker's 2012 sales rose five percent from 2011 to nearly 2.3 million vehicles on the strength of the Ford brand, which was the only nameplate to top 2 million in annual US sales.

"We are looking forward to a great 2013 as we begin this year with the product and capacity in place to expand our share," Ken Czuby, head of Ford sales, said in a conference call.

GM's sales grew four percent in 2012 to 2.6 million vehicles after it posted its best December in five years with deliveries up five percent year over year to 245,733.



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Obama inauguration trinkets cater to golfers, dog lovers



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Golfers, dog lovers and anyone with a fetish for motorcades can find that special something at the 57th Presidential Inauguration Store that went online Thursday.

The website (store.2013pic.org) is the official outlet for memorabilia

lions -- plus poster portraits of Obama by New York artist Chuck Close, of which only 2,013 are available for \$100 each.

But for those who want to honor the commander in chief on the back nine, there's a \$15 divot tool for fixing ball marks on golf greens and

connected with the January 20 start of US President Barack Obama's second term in the White House.

It features the usual selection of pens, coffee mugs, paperweights, lapel pins, cufflinks and medal-

a \$25 set of golf balls. Both are emblazoned with the inaugural seal.

Bo, the Portuguese water dog that became the nation's First Dog when it joined the Obama family in April 2009, is honored with "snow Bo" and "I paw Bo" buttons that go for \$5 a pair.

The presidential motorcade -- a highlight of public inaugural ceremonies in Washington on January 21 -- inspired a \$25 mug, a \$15 note cube and a \$5 dollar pair of buttons.

For apparel, there's a tight-fitting, made-in-USA women's T-shirt ("a great way to show you're excited for President Obama's second term," according to the website) for \$25 and a \$15 pair of "fun and stylish" Obama tube socks.

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Geithner likely to leave before next US fiscal showdown

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A new flurry of speculation surrounded US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner Thursday, prompting aides to reiterate his plans not to serve in President Barack Obama's second term.

Geithner is still expected to leave around the time Obama is sworn in on January 20, meaning he will not reprise his role as a top negotiator for the president in the next fiscal showdown looming over raising the US debt ceiling.

Several reports said that Geithner would leave by the end of the month, despite the brewing rows with Congress.

Geithner, a key player in Obama's effort to revive the US economy since the worst recession in decades, has long been known to be keen to return to New York, where he was president of the local

Federal Reserve Bank.

"Secretary Geithner has previously stated that he plans to be at Treasury until around the inauguration," said a Treasury spokesperson Thursday.

"We do not plan to make any further announcements about the timing of the Secretary's departure until after his successor is named."

Geithner's signal will stir immediate speculation over his successor, with White House chief of staff Jack Lew, a veteran Washington insider, seen as the favorite for the post.

The Treasury secretary had previously delayed his departure to help Obama maintain the economic recovery and to play a major role in the successful effort to avert the fiscal cliff budgetary crisis this week.

New Zealand police dismiss Madeleine McCann sighting

Wellington, New Zealand (AFP) - New Zealand police on Friday dismissed a fresh reported sighting of missing British girl Madeleine McCann, nearly six years after she went missing while holidaying with her family in Portugal.

The latest suspected sighting was on New Year's Eve in the resort town of Queenstown and in the same southern region of New Zealand where there have been other claims the youngster has been seen in recent years.

However, Queenstown detective sergeant Brian Cameron said police were "absolutely satisfied" the child was not Madeleine and it was not the first time someone had noted a similarity between the two girls.

The woman who reported the sighting told the South-

land Times newspaper a girl resembling Madeleine had entered her store with a dark-haired man on December 31.

"She had the same eye defect as Madeleine. Only a very small percentage of the population have that and I was just staring at it the whole time to the point I forgot what they had purchased," she said.

"My only reason for alerting anybody is because if my little girl was missing and if someone on the other side of the world was seen who bore any considerable resemblance, I would want it ruled out."

Madeleine was only three years old when she disappeared six years ago. In a Christmas message posted recently on their find-madeleine.com website, her mother Kate thanked people for continuing to care.

Macedonia's boycotting MPs to have salaries cut

SKOPJE (AFP) - Macedonia's parliament decided on Thursday to cut by two-thirds the salaries of opposition deputies who have been boycotting assembly sessions since a brawl broke out last month during a budget debate.

"Deputies who boycott the parliament will get a third of their salary as long as they abstain," said the decree adopted by the majority of the deputies present at the 123-seat assembly.

A deputy salary is around 1,000 euros (\$1,300) per month, almost three times the average monthly income of 350 euros in this former Yugoslav republic.

The leftist opposition, led by the SDSM party, said a "pay cut is a small price for democracy and freedom."

The move came after December 24 scuffles in the parliament between the SDSM deputies and ruling conservative MPs over the state budget.

After fighting between rival lawmakers inside and outside the parliament which left two lawmakers and 11 policemen injured, the SDSM said its deputies would boycott parliament's activities.

Malala to undergo skull surgery: Pakistan

LONDON (AFP) - Shot teenage Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai will undergo skull surgery within weeks at the British hospital where she is recovering from her injuries, the Pakistani government said Thursday.

Malala, 15, was brought to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham on October 15 after Taliban gunmen shot her in the head as she travelled on a school bus in the northwestern district of Swat.

On Saturday, the SDSM called for the government to resign amid a dire economic crisis in the country of two million people, where unemployment has reached 31 per-

cent. In 2012, Macedonia slipped into recession, with its economy impacted by neighbouring Greece's financial crisis.

Thousands of Mexicans devour enormous king cake



MEXICO CITY (AFP) - Tens of thousands of Mexicans wolfed down a 1.9-kilometer (1.2-mile) long king cake on Thursday, polishing it off in less than half-an-hour during the traditional feast in downtown Mexico City.

The Epiphany pastry weighed almost 9.4 tonnes and was made with 4.9 tonnes of flour, 2.8 tonnes of butter, one tonne of sugar and marmalade, hundreds of kilos of candied fruits and more than 43,000 eggs, the city government said.

Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera was among the first people to take a bite from the

"Rosca de Reyes," which was placed along tables in the historic Zocalo Plaza. Some 200,000 pieces were distributed.

Mexican families eat the bread in the run-up to the Epiphany on January 6, the day Christians believe the Three Wise Men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the baby Jesus.

A baby Jesus figurine is hidden in the cake and the person who finds it must make tamales -- a corn dumpling -- on February 2, the Day of the Candles, for those who shared the bread.

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International News

Delhi gang-rape suspects charged in court

NEW DELHI (AFP) - Police formally charged five men Thursday with the gang-rape and murder of a 23-year-old student, a crime which appalled India and led to national soul-searching about the treatment of women.

Police filed a string of charges including murder, rape and kidnapping against the suspects, listing evidence in a confidential 1,000-page document submitted to a district court in the south of the capital New Delhi.

The five aged between 35 and 19, who would face the death penalty if convicted, had been expected in court but were not present when the media were allowed in to listen to part of the proceedings.

The medical student from north India was repeatedly raped and violated with an iron bar on a moving bus in the capital on December 16 as she returned from a cinema with her boyfriend.

Protesters have massed in Indian cities daily since the as-

sault to demand the government and police take sex crimes more seriously, with tougher penalties for offenders and even chemical castration among measures being considered.

The latest incident, though far from rare in a country where gang rapes are commonplace, has led to an outpouring of criticism and deep self-reflection in the media and the political class about crimes against women in India.

A statement from the Delhi victim, who died at the weekend from her injuries, and an account from her boyfriend, who was badly beaten during the attack, are expected to form crucial parts of the evidence against the five.

A sixth suspect who is believed to be a minor aged 17 was not charged in the court at Saket on Thursday. Detectives are awaiting the results of a bone test to verify his age and determine whether he can be tried in an adult court.

The trial of the men, who were allegedly drunk when they took the private bus out for a joyride, is to be held in a special fast-tracked court aimed at avoiding the delays typical of India's dysfunctional justice system.

Amid public clamour for the guilty to be executed, Altamas Kabir, the country's chief justice, has cautioned against letting anger overwhelm the due process of the law.

Lawyers at the district court in New Delhi have refused to defend the suspects, meaning the government will have to appoint advocates for them.

Just 26 percent of the 24,206 cases of rape registered in 2011 in India resulted in a conviction, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

US school massacre kids return to class



MONROE, Connecticut (AFP) - Hundreds of US elementary school children who survived the gun massacre of 20 of their schoolmates and six staff finally returned to class Thursday at a new, heavily-guarded building. Teachers did everything possible to transform the alternate building in the nearby town of Monroe into what Newtown schools superintendent Janet Robinson called "a very cheerful elementary school." Approaches to the new Sandy Hook in Monroe were decorated with welcoming signs and balloons in the school's green and white colors. About 500 children were expected to start classes in rooms filled with their familiar, old school furniture.

Four injured in Disneyland Paris steam train accident

MEAUX (AFP) - Four people have been treated for minor injuries after a wagon broke off from a steam engine ride at Disneyland Paris, the theme park and police said on Thursday.

The four, including a pregnant woman and a 13-year-old girl, were taken to hospital after the accident on the five-wagon Disneyland Railroad ride on Wednesday, a police source said.

The source said the accident occurred after a bolt snapped between the first and second wagons of the train, sending the engine and one wagon ahead of the others as they approached the terminal.

The three rear wagons struck the first section when it stopped at the end of the line.

About 40 people were inside the train, which tours the

theme park, at the time of the accident.

A spokesman for the Euro Disney company, which operates the park, said the train ride was closed on Thursday and that the incident was minor.

The spokesman said those injured were out of hospital and had returned home or continued their stay at the theme park.


He said the accident had occurred at a "very slow speed" and said the train normally travelled at eight kilometres per hour (five miles per hour) when it was returning to the station.

Disneyland Paris, which marked its 20th anniversary in 2012, took in a record 16 million visitors last year but continues to report big losses after taking on significant levels of debt.

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Health & Living

Organ transplant scandal prompts calls for German reforms



BERLIN (AFP) - The head of the German doctors' lobby and politicians called Thursday for swift action to root out corruption following a scandal over preferential treatment for organ transplants.

The president of the German Medical Association, Frank Ulrich Montgomery, said physicians taking bribes in life-or-death cases would shatter the hard-earned faith that Germans have in them.

"Transplant doctors who still don't understand that they are destroying their own field with cheating and manipulation should get out of the profession," he told the daily Passauer Neue Presse.

Montgomery added that "all means available under criminal and professional law should be used" to bring corrupt doctors to justice.

His comments came after irregularities emerged at a trans-

plant centre in the eastern city of Leipzig.

The clinic said that between 2010 and 2012, 38 people were wrongly registered as dialysis patients so that they would be given a higher priority on waiting lists for a liver transplant.

The head of the clinic as well as two senior doctors have been given a leave of absence while the institution conducts an internal probe. Public prosecutors have opened a preliminary investigation.

The affair follows revelations in 2012 that other German hospitals engaged in dubious practices with organ transplants, prompting an independent commission to launch a sweeping review.

The Leipzig cases emerged in the course of that inquiry.

The chief health policy spokesman of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, Jens Spahn, urged root-and-branch reform of the organ transplant system, echoing calls by other parties.

"Manipulation to get certain patients higher on waiting lists could mean a death sentence for other patients who have a more urgent need for an organ," he told the daily Rheinische Post.

Such practices must be "decisively outlawed, punished and stopped for all time".

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Sci-Tech

Relief for Google as US ends monopoly probe



WASHINGTON (AFP) - US regulators Thursday closed a lengthy antitrust probe into Google, saying there was not enough evidence to show the Internet giant manipulated its search results to harm its competitors.

The Federal Trade Commission said it lacked a legal basis to bring a monopoly abuse case against Google for "search bias," as alleged by some rivals, but won commitments from the tech titan to end its "most troubling" practices on search and advertising.

FTC chairman Jon Leibowitz said the action concludes a year-and-a-half probe of the Internet giant, accused by rivals of abusing its market dominance.

Many of Google's critics "wanted the Commission to go

further in this investigation and regulate the intricacies of Google's search engine algorithm," Leibowitz said.

The FTC "exhaustively investigated allegations that Google unfairly manipulated its search engine results to harm its competitors," but found the evidence did not support an enforcement action, he said.

Even though some rivals dislike Google search, "it doesn't violate the American antitrust laws," he said.

Still, Google made "enforceable commitments" to change some practices criticized by rivals in a voluntary settlement.

Leibowitz said Google had "committed to stop the most troubling of its business practices related to Internet search and search advertising."

Google agreed to stop misappropriating or "scraping" the content of rivals that makes it appear as if it were from Google and to drop contractual restrictions that limited the ability of small businesses to advertise on competing search engines, he said.

In a separate patent case, Google agreed to an FTC order "to stop seeking to exclude competitors using essential patents," mainly from Motorola, which Google purchased, the FTC chief said.

The action in Washington leaves unclear the outcome of a similar probe by the European Commission into Google's alleged monopoly abuse.

The European Union said last month it was still seeking commitments from the US firm that it abused its dominant market position in Internet search.

Google's chief legal officer David Drummond said of the FTC decision: "The conclusion is clear: Google's services are good for users and good for competition."

Apple, Google gain in US smartphone market

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Apple and Google extended their dominance in the US smartphone market as 2012 neared its close, industry tracker comScore said on Thursday. The share of smartphone service subscribers relying on Google's Android software inched up to 53.7 percent in the three months leading up to De-



cember, while Apple's portion grew to 35 percent from 34.3 percent, comScore reported. The most popular mobile phones were made by South Korean consumer electronics titan Samsung, whose handsets were used by 26.9 percent of US telecom service subscribers, according to comScore. Apple's coveted iPhones accounted for 18.5 percent of subscribers in the overall mobile phone market, up from 17.1 percent at the end of August. Figures showing that the California companies are tightening their grips on the smartphone market were released as London-based Canonical weighed in with a business-oriented smartphone platform. Canonical announced a smartphone interface version of its Ubuntu desktop computer operating system based on open-source Linux code. Ubuntu smartphones will be able to dock with keyboards and monitors to provide personal computer capabilities, according to Canonical. Dell, Lenovo, and Hewlett Packard are listed among computer makers who build Ubuntu into machines for the global market. Ubuntu runs on more than 20 million desktop computers, according to Canonical. Smartphones powered by Ubuntu are not expected to be available until late this year or early next year.

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4. Line of cliffs
9. Mary's follower
13. Active type
15. Western star Lash
16. Locale
17. Nautical word
18. Freeway no-no
19. ___ Bator
20. The Washington ___
22. South Seas wrap
24. Not yet final, in law
25. Roof overhang
26. Verbalized
28. Pass through a filter
33. Fir tree resin

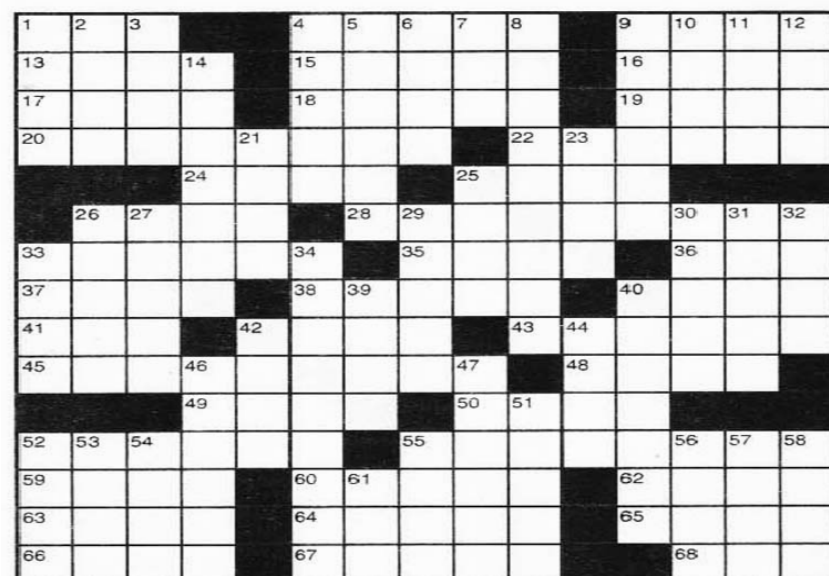
35. Savanna animal
36. Pierre's bed
37. Old oil flask
38. Upper-story bay window
40. "Some ___ Running"
41. Roman 52
42. Flutter
43. Perfume for men
45. Kudos
48. Slug or leech
49. ___ up (cram)
50. Alleviate
52. Met a bet
55. Abandoned
59. Nabisco bestseller
60. Gum resin
62. Highlands language
63. The Belmonts' frontman
64. In a snit

65. Social outing
66. ___-froid
67. Like catty humor
68. Energy

DOWN

1. Maroon frontman Levine
2. Flight for Amelia
3. Ball-___ hammer
4. Pivots
5. Feline favorite
6. Stuck in ___
7. Capek drama
8. Florida panhandle port
9. Maryland racecourse
10. Woody Guthrie's son
11. Nasty

12. Big ___ (scientific theory)
14. Resurrect a partnership
21. Skirt style
23. Name of three English rivers
25. Ohio lake
26. Of a Frankish tribe
27. Gelatin side dish
29. Choice part
30. Car rental company
31. Like Caspar Milquetoast
32. Saisons, in Soissons
33. Silvery fish
34. Strainers
39. All Mustang Sally wants to do
40. Frolicked
42. Polar bear's raft
44. Destroy, in Devonshire
46. Elliptical
47. Gave the impression that
51. Theater remark
52. Food fish
53. Cantata selection
54. Singer Redbone
55. Where heros are made
56. U-shaped pipe section
57. Noble Italian name
58. Not shallow
61. Author ___ Yutang



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9	2	6	1	8	5	4	7	3
5	1	4	9	7	2	6	5	8
7	5	8	6	3	1	9	2	4
1	9	5	8	2	6	5	4	7
2	6	5	4	9	7	1	8	3
4	8	7	3	5	1	2	9	6
8	7	1	2	6	9	4	5	3
6	5	9	5	4	8	7	2	1
5	4	2	7	1	3	8	6	9

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

IMF: US 'cliff' actions not enough

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The International Monetary Fund said Wednesday that US actions to avoid the fiscal cliff did not go far enough to address the country's long-term fiscal deficit and debt problems.

The global emergency lender cheered the political deal finalized late Tuesday in Washington that allowed the country to avoid severe spending cuts and tax hikes programmed to take place.

"In the absence of Congressional action the economic recovery would have been derailed," IMF spokesman Gerry Rice said in a statement.

But, he added, the Congress made little progress on

dealing with the larger-picture problem of the US deficit, and the need to increase the country's statutory debt ceiling in order to keep funding that deficit.

"More remains to be done to put US public finances back on a sustainable path without harming the still fragile recovery," Rice said in a statement.

"Specifically, a comprehensive plan that ensures both higher revenues and containment of entitlement spending over the medium term should be approved as soon as possible."

Additionally, he said, "it is crucial to raise the debt ceiling expeditiously and remove remaining uncertainties about

the spending sequester and expiring appropriation bills."

In the last-minute compromise between Democrats and Republicans, automatic tax increases slated to hit January 1 were pared back.

But scheduled steep federal spending cuts, called the sequester, were put off for two months, meaning Congress will have to go through another battle over how to deal with them, in addition to long-term deficit reduction measures.

France borrows at record low rates

PARIS (AFP) - France borrowed about 8 billion euros (\$10.6 billion) at record low rates on Thursday, the country's debt agency said, in its first long term bond auction of 2013 in a sign that investors are still looking past a fragile French economy and recent downgrades by credit agencies.

The sale continued a particularly good stretch seen by the government in 2012 when France borrowed at rates lower than ever, despite slowing growth and the country's loss of its top notch rating

from agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

"For the benchmark 10-year debt that is of particular interest, the French rates continue their downward trend," said Rene Defosse, bond strategist at Natixis.

The agency said it sold 3.53 billion euros in bonds to mature in October 2022 at an average rate of 2.07 percent, down from 2.22 percent at a similar sale in October.

This was the lowest rate on record paid by France paid for 10-year debt.

The slide in rates was significant for longer term debt as well. France sold 1.165 billion euros in bonds set to mature in October 2032 at 2.84 percent, down sharply from 4.15 percent at a similar auction in May 2011.

Rates for bonds maturing in 2020 and 2019 also dropped significantly.

France plans to borrow 169 billion euros in medium and long term debt in 2013, down from 178 billion euros in 2012.

Oil market slips as euphoria dims over fiscal cliff deal

LONDON (AFP) - Global oil prices slid Thursday on profit-taking as initial euphoria faded over the fiscal cliff deal in the United States, analysts said.

Brent North Sea crude for February fell 42 cents to \$112.05 a barrel in late afternoon deals in London.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in February, handed back eight cents to \$93.04 per barrel.


"Crude oil prices retreated ... following the strong rally that dominated the market yesterday after the US fiscal cliff deal," said analyst Myrto Sokou at the Sudden Financial brokerage.

"The US dollar started to strengthen against the euro and added some pressure to the market," she added.

The stronger greenback makes dollar-denominated crude more expensive for buyers using weaker currencies like the euro. That tends to weigh on demand and prices.

Crude futures had rallied Wednesday following news that the United States -- the world's biggest consumer of crude oil -- has avoided "fiscal cliff" taxation hikes and spending cuts that had threatened to plunge it back into recession.

On the first trading day of



Daily Exchange Rates

Current as of: 01/03/2013

	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.82
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	2.92
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	194.38
Netherlands	EUR	230.59	232.69	235.70
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	27.86
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	31.84
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	32.56
Japan	JPY	214.88	216.84	206.88

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2013, Brent had hit \$112.90 per barrel -- its highest level since mid-October. New York crude touched \$93.87, which was a mid-September pinnacle.

However, the market has since pulled back somewhat as on growing concerns over further political wrangling in Washington in the coming months.

There are also big worries about the lifting of the debt ceiling, also at the end of February, with analysts saying the country could see a repeat of

the row in summer 2011 that saw Washington's credit rating downgraded for the first time.

Traders were meanwhile switching their attention to Friday's crucial US non-farm payrolls data for a better idea of the health of the world's number one economy.

On the same day, the US government's Department of Energy will also publish its weekly oil inventories report, two days later than normal owing to public holidays earlier in the week.



CHONGQUIN : This picture shows a model of the Meiquan 22nd Century building in China's southwest Chongqing on January 3, 2012. Already famed for fake designer bags and pirated DVDs, imitation in China may have reached new heights with a set of towers that strongly resemble ones designed by renowned architect Zaha Hadid. It could rank among the more flagrant ripoffs in a country already notorious for imitating foreign products without permission -- but the developer of the Chongqing project, Meiquan 22nd Century, has denied any copying.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

PAPA PEERS POET
ALAN OWLET ULNA
CINDERELLA MIGS
EATING SALTPORK
ROY TEAK
SOLOS SSE MISTS
PLAN HIP PENPAL
ALB PARENTS APE
DIESEL NOS TREE
SELLS STD BREST
ITCH WOE
SEEPSOUT INSTEF
HARP STEPMOTHEF
ESSE TULIP LOLA
NEER APRIL FISTS

New Brickell Bay Sand Beach lounge offers a refreshing change both day and night!



attracted island fashionistas as a relaxed, elegant place to while away the evening hours.

Sand Beach also provides a very interesting lunch menu in an ambiance that makes you feel as if you are still stretched

The holidays are upon us, which mean festive times for Aruba, but also busy beaches with crowded eateries and often very long waits just to sit down and get a bite to eat. Aruba's newest lounge, Brickell Bay Sand Beach, in Palm Beach, created quite a stir with its recent opening, revealing a chic, unique environment that has strongly

out on the beach, but with a distinctly more tranquil and appealing surroundings, particularly these end of the year days.

A very interesting and reasonable menu features lunch alternatives such as a 6 oz Rock Lobster Tail "Sandwich" on garlic toast with gourmet fries for only \$17, aside from favorite

lunch bar fare. If the frenetic crowds at the beach bars and the demands on the wait help are not quite providing that tranquil setting you are seeking from your Aruban sojourn, you just might want to check it out.

Lunch also includes use of their very appealing pool deck and they offer the latest craze, beach tennis. It is a very interesting alternative, away from the crowds, but still with the feeling of being on the beach or around the pool. It also has an arcade of interesting shops, a mini-market, and the best stocked hookah store on the island.

The new eatery/nightclub is still basically a night spot, and features several attractive specials, including a nightly 2-for-1 happy hours from 5:00 to 7:00 PM which includes frozen drinks and premium brands. There is great entertainment without a cover charge. This Sunday they will feature one of the island's most popular and dynamic entertainers of the last decade,

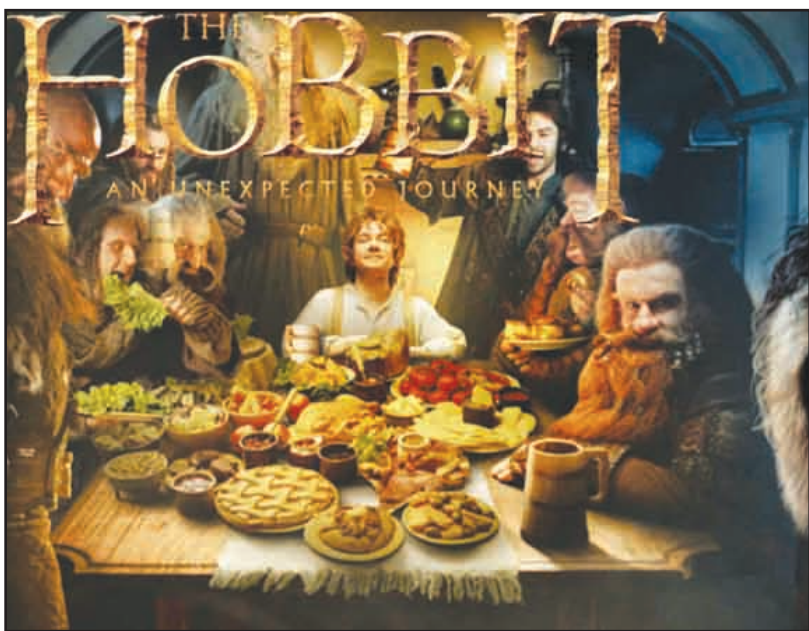


Marisela and the Aquarius Band, back on Aruba for a limited engagement. Marisela will be heating up Palm Beach for a very cool night at the Sandbar on Sunday, December 23 from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. This is a performer known for "bringing down the house," so don't

miss this rare opportunity to enjoy some great entertainment and discover Aruba's most stylish new nightspot. Brickell Bay Sand Beach lounge is located directly across the street from the South Beach Center. If you are wondering what is new and hip on Aruba, this is it!



'Hobbit' fights off rivals atop New Year US box office



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey" fought off all comers at the North American box office over the New Year holidays, beating two Oscar-tipped movies to the top spot, figures showed Wednesday.

The long-awaited first part

of Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" prequel trilogy earned \$31.9 million in its third week in theaters, according to box office tracker Exhibitor Relations.

That was just enough to keep it ahead of Quentin Tarantino's brutal western

"Django Unchained," which made \$30.1 million in its debut weekend in second place, ahead of musical adaptation "Les Misérables" at \$27.3 million.

Both films are in the running in this year's Hollywood awards season, which climaxes with the Oscars on February 24. Tarantino's film already has five Golden Globe nominations, against four for "Les Miz."

All-important Oscars nominations are due to be announced next Thursday, January 10.

In fourth place was another debut offering, "Parental Guidance," a comedy starring Billy Crystal and Bette Midler looking after their grandchildren, which earned \$14.6 million.

Tom Cruise crime drama "Jack Reacher," in which the Hollywood A lister's character

investigates fictional shootings by a trained military sniper, took fifth spot with weekend earnings of \$13.6 million, two weeks after its release.


Also on its second weekend in theaters, Judd Apatow's comedy "This is 40," billed as "a sort-of sequel" to the 2007 film "Knocked Up," slipped to sixth place \$12.5 million.

In seventh spot was Steven Spielberg's political drama "Lincoln" -- another Oscar hopeful which topped Globes nominations with seven nods - earning \$7.3 million on its

eighth weekend.

"The Guilt Trip," about a mother-son road trip starring Barbra Streisand and Seth Rogan, earned \$6.5 million for eighth place, just ahead of the 3D version of the 2001 animated hit "Monsters, Inc.," which took in \$6.4 million.


Rounding out the top 10 was Dreamworks's "Rise of the Guardians," featuring Jack Frost, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman and a tattooed Russian Santa Claus, which earned \$4.9 million on its sixth weekend in theaters.



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5 Burgers Aruba: Now your best breakfast bargain!



A favorite stop for a great burger for lunch or dinner has just expanded their hours and menu to offer some of the best breakfast bargains to be found in Palm Beach. Owners Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. The couple's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu from an inter-

nationally known franchise with a "5", which now includes breakfast.

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," believes Aaron. Upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy,

made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

However, beginning at 7 a.m., patrons can now order 2 eggs any style, (omelets with 3 fillings are \$7.99) toast and coffee with unlimited refills for the special introductory price of only \$4.49, (\$5.48 with bacon) or All-you-can-eat pancakes, for \$6.99, again, with free refills on fresh coffee. Breakfast is served until 11 a.m. Famous for their fries made from fresh potatoes, Aaron has been working for months on devising the most irresistible home fries recipe, chunky and tender with skins still on; after much testing and tasting, he got the thumbs up from his harshest critic, Rosie; so this is another treat you have to try.

A glance at their burger menu will certainly tempt you to return for lunch or dinner, to sample their famous specialty items such as the Gouda, Farmer's or Man Burger (al-



most 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with Aarons' secret-recipe crispy onion rings. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jala-peño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato...whatever, the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

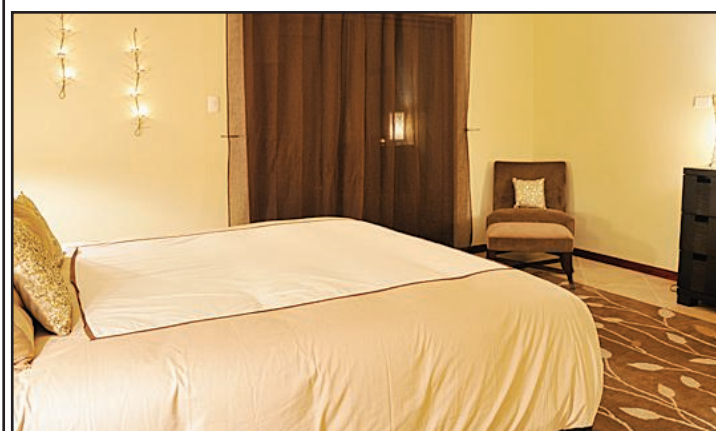
5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of fries is enough to be shared by

two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!"

Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

5 Burgers is now open early until 10-ish at night; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district at now extra cost for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for either owner to sit and chat, sharing their knowledge of the island while making sure patrons are happy with their meal.

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest



Management of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, reports that sales have been very good and encouraging as the global economy recovers and people looking to purchase vacation homes have found that Gold Coast is an outstanding investment value. Director of Sales, Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners in reality do not spend a great amount of time personally to use the villas or town homes they purchase, but are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on

Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community where the value of properties has only increased over time. It is only minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy operate Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project and the scope of actual and planned facilities and amenities. We have spoken to countless island visitors to find out what they would really

want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who have dreamed of their own home in Aruba contributed to the realization of Gold Coast Aruba which when complete will be a community of 260 town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional community pool areas. The Clubhouse is about to start construction and will offer to the community homeowners and visitors 2 tennis courts, full service spa and fitness center as well as a stunning pool area and is expected to be complete by early 2013. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the on site management's rental services program. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, make it easy for some owners to see a valuable return on their investment.

The design of the resi-

dences and public areas is open, airy and spacious, taking full advantage of the island environment, with quality construction and finishing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options allowing buyers to individualize their homes. An elegant and chic furniture package is available or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.



There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the

investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast management have inaugurated a number of in-house services and have recently become affiliated Interval International, the world's largest network of vacation ownership properties which provides an unlimited international pool of investors to tap for ownership and rental prospects. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination is also available through the Interval International affiliation. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, child care, catering services, car rental through its partnership with AVIS car rental are also available as well as pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can also be arranged through their property management department. Personnel are also available to assist in arranging restaurant reservations and island activities.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

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SPORT

Football: Balotelli and Mancini clash in training-ground row

LONDON (AFP) - Mario Balotelli's future at Manchester City was cast into doubt once again on Thursday after photographs emerged showing him in an apparent training-ground bust-up with manager Roberto Mancini.

Media reports claimed that Mancini lost his temper with his Italian compatriot after Balotelli made a reckless challenge on team-mate Scott Sinclair at the club's Carrington training base on the edge of Manchester.

The pictures, published widely in the British media, show Mancini gripping Balotelli's orange bib in an apparent rage, before the two men are separated by members of City's coaching staff.

The Italy striker, 22, has been a recurrent source of controversy ever since arriving in Manchester from Inter Milan in 2010.

He has twice been dropped from City's match-day squad this season and Mancini has repeatedly warned him that he is in danger of wasting his talent.

In December, Balotelli dropped legal action against City after taking them to a Premier League tribunal in an attempt to overturn a fine of two weeks' wages over his poor disciplinary record last season.

Mancini also chastised him after a sloppy performance in City's 3-2 loss to Manchester United in last month's Manchester derby, in which he was substituted in the 52nd minute.

Yachting: Vendee Globe leaders in tense Atlantic battle

PARIS (AFP) - French sailors Francois Gabart and Armel Le Cleac'h continued their battle for Vendee Globe honours on Thursday as the two men entered the Atlantic Ocean but remained a fractional 35 nautical miles apart.

Gabart held his slender lead after 53 days at sea as the two men passed Cape Horn earlier in the day after battling Pacific counter

winds with Jean-Pierre Dick lying third 330 miles adrift and Britain's Alex Thomson a distant 610.5 miles back.

Just 12 boats remain in the race from a starting fleet of 20 as they have already passed the halfway point on their way back to the west coast of France where the race began.

Swiss helmsman Bernard Stamm was disqualified on Wednesday after receiving assistance to his damaged vessel but he still maintains hope of continuing pending an appeal to the international jury.

Standings (at 19h00 GMT):

1. François Gabart (FRA/Macif) 6,557.5 nautical miles from the finish, 2. Armel Le Cleac'h (FRA/Banque Populaire) at 35.5 miles, 3. Jean-Pierre Dick (FRA/Virbac-Paprec 3) 330.1, 4. Alex Thomson (GBR/Hugo Boss) 610.5, 5. Jean Le Cam (FRA/SynerCiel) 1,894.8, 6. Mike Golding (GBR/Gamesa) 2,298.8, 7. Dominique Wavre (SUI/Mirabaud) 2,371.6, 8. Javier Sanso (ESP/Acciona) 2,491.4, 9. Arnaud Boissieres (FRA/Akena Verandas) 2,562, 10. Bertrand de Broc (FRA/EDM Projets) 3,634.9 miles

Tennis: Davydenko storms into Qatar semi-finals



DOHA (AFP) - Nikolay Davydenko stormed into the Qatar Open semi-finals on Thursday with an express train performance which gave him a chance of earning a first final for 20 months.

The former world number three from Russia's 6-1, 6-1 win over Simone Bolelli, the world number 83 from Italy, was the quickest of the tournament and maintained his hopes of regaining the Qatar Open title he so spectacularly won three years ago.

Davydenko did that by becoming one of only two players at that time who had beaten Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer in the same tournament, and he might have gone on to other glories had he not broken his wrist only two months later.

Now though the manner of his third successive straight sets win -- lasting only 49 minutes -- hinted at more triumphs still being possible for a 31-year-old whose last season on the ATP World Tour this may be.

His buoyant mood belied the fact that he has not completely erased the aches and pains which have dogged him and dragged him down to 44 in

the rankings in the last two years.

"Players are never one hundred percent fit in the body -- if I die, yes, we have no pain," smiled Davydenko.

But his new optimism still shone through.

That sounded a little bit like a veiled warning to David Ferrer, the top-seeded Spaniard whom Davydenko plays today.

Brands will now play his third Frenchman in four rounds -- Richard Gasquet, the number two seed, who enjoyed a 6-1, 6-3 win over Lukas Lacko, the world number 50 from Slovakia.

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Tennis: Murray sees off local hero Millman in Brisbane



BRISBANE (AFP) - US Open champion Andy Murray won a surprisingly tough second-round clash against Australian qualifier John Millman to move into the quarter-finals of the Brisbane International on

Thursday.

Murray appeared headed for a straightforward win when he raced through the first set in just 30 minutes, only for an inspired Millman to fight back and deservedly claim the second.

But the world number three regrouped and took control at 2-2 in the decider to ease away and win 6-1, 5-7, 6-3 in just over two hours.

Millman, 23, is a Brisbane local who spent most of 2012

on the Challenger and Futures circuits, entering the Brisbane International ranked 199 in the world. His match against Murray was only his fifth on the main ATP tour.

However, he never looked overawed against the world number three and played some spectacular tennis to give Murray a huge scare.

"I'd not seen him play before but I knew he has a good work rate," Murray said.

"He's gone through a lot of tough losses and kept fighting and he had an injury a few years ago and came back.

"He's a lot better than his ranking, that's for sure. I expected a tough match and didn't expect him to go away, and he didn't."

Murray was clutching his stomach and legs at various stages throughout the second and third sets, but stressed he had no injury concerns.

Murray now plays Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin in the

quarter-finals after Istomin downed veteran Australian Lleyton Hewitt 7-5, 7-5.

Earlier, rising Bulgarian star Grigor Dimitrov upset second seeded Canadian Milos Raonic 6-3, 6-4.

Dimitrov served marginally better than Raonic and took his

chances when they came, breaking the Canadian once in each set to wrap up victory in just over an hour.

He will now play Jurgen Melzer in the quarter-finals after the seventh seeded Austrian beat Belgian David Goffin 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

Golf: McIlroy may skip 2016 Olympics



LONDON (AFP) - World number one Rory McIlroy admitted on Thursday that he may sit out the 2016 Olympics to avoid a storm over the sensitivities of playing for either Britain or Ireland. The 23-year-old McIlroy, who is from Holywood in Northern Ireland, would be eligible for selection by either Great Britain or Ireland at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro when golf makes its Games debut. But he told the BBC that he may skip the tournament as he does not want to offend either country.

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E-mail:
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2013 Dakar Rally Raid



LIMA, Peru : Mechanics rest after working on a DAF truck from Netherland's team who takes part of the Dakar 2013 Peru-Argentina-Chile competition at a beach in Magdalena, Lima on January 02, 2012. The 2013 Dakar Rally will feature 459 vehicles -- cars, bikes, trucks and quads -- and will cover 8,400km of Peru and Chile, with a stay in Argentina.



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NBA: James shines, Mavs continue to struggle in OT



LeBron James #6 drives to the basket to score

his sixth game since returning from right knee surgery. The German star played a total of 29 minutes Wednesday at the American Airlines Arena.

Dallas' Chris Kaman finished with 14 points and 10 rebounds.

Nowitzki scored 15 of his points in the second half. He nailed a clutch two pointer from 15 feet with just four seconds left on the clock to send the game into overtime.

But Miami's Allen began the extra session with a three-pointer and James sank a jumper off a Dallas turnover for a 108-103 Heat lead.

Dallas' Vince Carter then tried an ill-advised inbound pass that was picked off by Wade who went in for the dunk, giving the Heat a comfortable seven-point lead just over one minute into the overtime.

While in Oakland Stephen Curry had 31 points, eight assists and six rebounds to lead the Golden State Warriors to a 115-94 win Wednesday over Los Angeles, handing the Clippers their second straight loss.

David Lee finished with 24 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists, while Klay Thompson

nailed five three-pointers en route to 19 points for the Warriors at Oracle Arena. Golden State have now won four straight.

Los Angeles closed out 2012 on a franchise-record 17-game win streak, but the Clippers lost a 92-78 contest to the Denver Nuggets on New Year's Day before suffering their second consecutive defeat against the Warriors.

Jamal Crawford led the Clippers with 24 points, while Chris Paul added 23 points and six assists in the loss.

MIAMI (AFP) - The Miami Heat edged the struggling Dallas Mavericks 119-109 in overtime Wednesday behind 32 points from LeBron James who flirted with a triple double.

James finished with 12 rebounds and nine assists for Miami who won their second-straight game in overtime and extended the Mavericks woes in extra time.

Miami ended a two-game losing skid with a 112-110 overtime victory on Monday against Orlando.

Dwyane Wade finished with 27 points and 10 rebounds for the Heat, who handed Dallas their ninth-straight overtime loss dating back to the 2011-12 season.

Chris Bosh and Ray Allen had 17 and 15 points respectively as Miami started the overtime with a 7-0 run and never looked back.

The Mavericks lost their seventh game of their last eight despite 30 points from O.J. Mayo and a season-best 19 points from Dirk Nowitzki.

Nowitzki, who also had six rebounds, was playing in just

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